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C O N F I D E N T I A L CASABLANCA 000737

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FOR NEA/MAG

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TAGS: [MO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: ISLAMIST PARLIAMENTARIAN OFFERS REGARDS BUT NO  
MEETING

Classified By: Principal Officer Douglas C. Greene for reasons 1.4 (b)  
and (d)

¶1. (C) In recent weeks we have been meeting with Casablanca-based political party leaders to take the temperature in Morocco, s largest city on political preparations for the 2007 Moroccan Parliamentary elections. When we called for an appointment with Parliamentarian and Party of Justice and Development (PJD) hard-liner Mustapha Ramid, ConGen Casablanca received a hearty "no thank you." On June 16, LES, having a prior acquaintance with Ramid, called to request a meeting with the Consul General. Ramid said that there was no need for a meeting and that he refused to meet with any American officials until the U.S. is out of Iraq.

¶2. (C) During the conversation Ramid said that he recognized the U.S. as a great power and claimed he had enormous respect for the country and its people. He felt, however, that under the Bush administration America had "committed many crimes against Arabs and Muslims" and had acted with "no human feelings and no mercy." LES pointed out to Ramid that the meeting would be an opportunity to discuss the issues and express his concerns directly to an American official. Ramid's response was that he was sure the meeting would be unproductive as had been most of his meetings with American journalists and representatives of independent American organizations. Ramid quickly closed the conversation with "My dear brother, please tell his Excellency that I am sorry and that I will knock on his door once the Americans leave Iraq." (Comment: Ramid was abrasive when he attended a reception hosted by the Mission in 2004, but his boycott of U.S. officials is a fairly recent development. He similarly boycotted his own party, s conference on U.S.-Morocco relations in April, to which the PJD invited Polcouns to speak. End Comment.)

¶3. (SBU) Ramid's decision not the meet with any American officials contrasts with the actions of PJD Secretary General Saadeddine Othmani, who recently visited Washington and remains open and friendly with emboffs. In fact, Ramid's reaction to Othmani, s U.S. visit has been somewhat controversial. During a recent appearance on Al Jazira's program "Hiwar Maftouh" or Open Dialogue, Ramid fell just short of openly criticizing Othmani for making the journey. He diplomatically judged the voyage to be "inopportune considering America's position regarding Iraq and Palestine."

14. (C) In the same broadcast Ramid reinforced his hard line credentials, by raising taboo subjects such as constitutional reform, new roles for Parliament and the King, and the need for a redistribution of power. His interest in more rapid reform, however, may be only skin deep. In 2000

Mustapha Ramid organized a demonstration in Casablanca against the Moudawana, arguing that the new family code is against Islamic principles. He argued that doing away with the practice of polygamy is unwise since it is an acceptable way "to regulate the problem of extra-marital affairs or cope with an ill or infertile wife."

15. (C) Comment: Always outspoken and often controversial Mustapha Ramid is none the less an important voice in the PJD. After the 2002 elections he was chosen as his party's caucus leader in the Lower Chamber. Because of his hard-line stance, however, the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) pressed the PJD to find a more suitable replacement. Currently, he is the chair of the Parliament's Human Rights Committee and enjoys a high level support within his party, even if his selection as caucus leader was overturned. Ramid's comment, in a recent interview with international Arabic language newspaper Acharq Al-Aswat, that "the majority of the PJD has not changed its opinions (criticisms) of America" in light of Othmani's recent America visit indicates that there is no consensus within the party on at least some major issues. End Comment.  
GREENE